



February Monthly Newsletter

**Monthly Commentary: Is Our
Democracy in Jeopardy?**

Most would agree we are living in turbulent times. Throughout our history, Americans have faced challenges, beginning with the American Revolution and our nation's very creation. Our founding fathers considered American democracy a "grand experiment" as they sought to create a government that was "entrusted to the people" — no monarch or hereditary ruling class; no state church. When asked if the Constitutional Convention had created a republic or a monarchy, Benjamin Franklin replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." Our American form of government requires active civic participation if it is to endure.

The fifty-two word Preamble to our Constitution beginning with "We the People," lays out the document's purpose: "To establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land and is based on the Rule of Law, not the rule of man. Those elected or appointed to serve — members of Congress, the president, Cabinet officials, judges, and members of the military — swear an oath to uphold the Constitution — not allegiance to a person.

Under the Rule of Law, power derives from constitutions and laws; no one is above the law; there is equality under the law, and governance is stable and predictable. Under the rule of man, power rests with the personal will of the leader who dictates the rules, places themselves above the law, and governs through unpredictability and personal vendettas.

Attributes of the Rule of Law also include separation of powers. We have three coequal branches of government; Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Each branch has specific areas they oversee with checks and balances designed to keep any one from becoming too powerful. When a branch oversteps its authority or cedes its responsibilities, our democracy is weakened and the democracy itself is jeopardized.

Some historians suggest that the average lifespan of a democracy is 200-250 years. Contributing factors to a democracy's decline include apathy and failure to participate in governance. In the 2024 presidential election, less than 74% of citizens eligible to vote bothered to register, and of those, only 65% actually voted.

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Other warning signs include economic instability — as of 2023, 1% of American households hold 30% of the nation's wealth and the American middle class has continued to shrink over time— excessive polarization, characterizing rivals as enemies or evil, rejection of election results (even before the election is held), rampant dis-information, undermining the press, and violence. Ringing any bells?

This year we will celebrate our 250th birthday. America has been characterized as the “land of the free and the home of the brave;” the envy of the world. Hundreds of thousands have given their lives defending this democracy. We cannot let it falter on our watch! Attend rallies, make calls, write letters. Be sure you are registered to vote and then educate yourself about candidates and ballot issues through Candidate and Ballot Issues Forums, Vote411, Ballotopedia, the Colorado Blue Book, and other reliable sources. We each must do what we can.

To explore “how power operates in a moment of democratic strain,” the Colorado League of Women Voters has put together a four-part Democracy Speaker Series. “Understanding Power” and “Threatened Democracy” were the topics for the January 15 and January 22 sessions. On January 29 they discussed “Where Power Lives.” Links to recordings of these sessions are available by emailing lwvmzc@gmail.com . A watch party is planned at the Cortez Library on February 19, 4:30-6:30 to view the final session, “The Future of Democracy.” You can Zoom from home by registering at [here](#). There is a charge to Zoom at home.

-Karen Sheek

Chair, League of Women Voters, Montezuma County

Membership Reminders

Thanks for your interest in the League of Women Voters - Montezuma County! We are thrilled that you may have an interest in joining. You can easily join online, [here](#).

If you are new to LWV and do NOT want to join or renew online, you may pick up a paper membership form at one of our in-person League meetings, or [print off a paper form here](#).

Fill out the form and attach a check payable to "**LWV United States**" then mail the form and your check to:

LWV Montezuma County
PO Box 1582
Cortez 81321

If you would like to make a donation to our local League, please make your check payable to "**LWV Montezuma County**" and mail to the address list above. Thank you!

You can also stop by and talk with our Membership Chair, Connie, at our next League meeting (typically at one of our 3 local libraries on the second Saturday of each month, 10:15-noon, or email lwmzc@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

- February 7 - 10:15AM - Cortez Public Library - 202 N Park St, Cortez
 - Join us for a viewing of *Dream with Me* - run time is 1 hr 5 min
 - Saba is one of over 800,000 "Dreamers" who took advantage of the DACA program in 2012. In 2017, the Trump administration made the decision to rescind DACA. With her immigration status once again in limbo, Saba faces a new set of challenges.
- February 19 - 4:30-6PM - Cortez Public Library - 202 N Park St, Cortez
 - The LWV of Montezuma County will cover the registration costs to join the LWV CO for its Democracy Speaker Series: Session #4 - The Future of Democracy
 - If you are not able to join us at the library, you may [register here](#) to watch online via Zoom. Please note you will need to pay the registration fee if you watch from home.
- February 21 - 10:15AM - Cortez Public Library - 202 N Park St, Cortez
 - Join us for a workshop with immigration lawyer Hans Meyer to learn about the basics of our immigration system and dispel some common myths.
- March 11 - 6:30PM - Cortez City Hall - 123 E Roger Smith Ave, Cortez
 - Join City Council candidates for a candidate meet & greet and forum.

What is the "One Big Beautiful Bill" and Its Impact?

The National League of Women Voters has created this resource to explain the details of the bill. [You can read the full post here](#), but we're also going to quote/share highlights of the resource during the next several newsletters.

"How the OBBB Impacts Health Coverage: Medicaid and Medicare

Medicaid Cuts

Medicaid is the country's single largest source of health coverage, insuring nearly 72 million, or 1 in 5. This includes children, pregnant people, parents, older adults with limited incomes, and people with disabilities. Medicaid covers essential care like doctors' visits, hospitalizations, long-term care, maternity care, mental health treatment, and rural clinic services.

The OBBB makes the largest cuts to Medicaid in the program's history. According to the latest estimate by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the law will cause 10 million more people to become uninsured by 2034.

Making it Harder to Enroll and Stay Enrolled in Medicaid

The new law will drop eligible people from Medicaid due to increased administrative burden. This is because the bill requires a significant amount of new paperwork that will likely result in eligible people being dropped due to missing mail, late submissions, states being overburdened, and more.

For the next decade, the OBBB blocks the implementation of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Eligibility and Enrollment final rule, which was designed to streamline the process for people to enroll and stay enrolled in Medicaid and apply for the Medicare Savings Program. The Medicare Savings Program helps people with low incomes afford Medicare premiums and cost-sharing.

The OBBB also requires states to check the eligibility of Medicaid

expansion enrollees (adults with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level) every six months instead of every 12 months.

Medicaid Job Loss Penalty

The new law requires Medicaid recipients who are able-bodied and 19-64 years of age to work, do community service, or participate in work training for at least 80 hours per month, or go to school part time. This includes people with children over 13 years of age.

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Most Medicaid enrollees already work, and most who do not will be exempt from this new requirement. Thus, the OBBB will not increase the number of people who are employed but will drop more eligible people from Medicaid due to administrative errors and unexpected job loss."

--More next month or you can read the full article here, now.

Resources

Our priority is to provide factual, unbiased information and connect groups across our community. To that end, here are some suggested resources to stay informed and learn more:

- **Colorado League of Women Voters**
 - [Colorado Voting Rights Act](#)
 - [Legislative Action Report](#)
 - [Where the League Stands](#)
 - [Legislative Conference 25](#)
 - [Redistricting in Colorado](#)
 - [Contact Elected Officials](#)
 - [LWVCO Task Forces](#)
- [5 Calls](#) >> scripts for callings your representatives about a variety of issue areas
- [League of Women Voters Bill Tracker](#)
- [Just Security](#) >> litigation tracker with updates
- [Congress.gov](#) >> find your federal Representative and Senators
 - Remember to sign up for their newsletters!

How to Get Involved

- Attend our regular meetings, the second Saturday of each month, usually at one of our county libraries;
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), check out our [website](#) and/or newsletter calendar for other League sponsored events;
- Join the League. You can register online: [portal.lwv.org](#) or in-person at one our meetings;
- Keep us in the loop if you hear of events or projects you believe the League might want to promote or partner with.
- **We can be reached at lwvmzc@gmail.com.**

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